

ABSTRACT

A method for estimating the degradation of the trapping capacity of a NO_x-Trap catalytic converter, in accordance with which, if the actual duration of a first NO_x regeneration process is equal to the predetermined duration, it is assumed that

5 the trapping capacity is unchanged; if the actual duration of the first NO_x regeneration process is less than the predetermined duration, at least one corrective action is performed in order to attempt to counteract the degeneration of the NO_x-Trap catalytic converter, a subsequent NO_x regeneration process is performed, if the actual duration of the subsequent NO_x regeneration process is equal to the

10 predetermined duration, then new characteristic operating parameters for the corrective action are used for the subsequent life of the NO_x-Trap catalytic converter whereas, if the actual duration of the subsequent NO_x regeneration process is less than the predetermined duration, the estimated trapping capacity of the NO_x-Trap catalytic converter is reduced.